

REMARKS

In the Office Action mailed January 12, 2007, the Examiner noted that claims 1-9 were pending, and rejected all claims. Claim 7 has been canceled, thus, in view of the forgoing claims 1-6 and 8-9 remain pending for reconsideration which is requested. No new matter has been added. The Examiner's rejections and objections are traversed below.

In item 6 on page 2, claim 7 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-stature subject matter. Claim 7 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

In item 7 on pages 3-8 of the Office Action the Examiner rejected claims 1-9 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Beniyama et al. US 6,799,314 (hereinafter Beniyama). The Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejections of these claims.

Page 4 of the Office Action asserted that "definition information which defines information for controlling a work flow" of claim 1, recited at lines 2-3, was anticipated by work flow execution status information in Beniyama, illustrated in FIG. 1 as reference numeral 0122. Beniyama disclosed that "[w]ork flow execution status information stores execution status of a work or business flow" in column 5 at lines 5-6. FIG. 6 illustrates work flow execution status information and it is clear from the table shown that work flow execution status information merely shows status information (e.g. "completed", "ready" or "Initial" in Status 0604 column) and does not define "information for controlling a work flow" as recited above in claim 1.

Additionally, the Office Action asserted the "screen definition information which defines screen items of a plurality of screens used in the work flow" of claim 1, recited at lines 3-4, was anticipated by process definition, illustrated in FIG.1 as reference numeral 0121. Beniyama disclosed that "process definition 0121 is represented as a directed graph which as a plurality of work definitions 0202 linked by arrows 0201" at column 4, lines 18-20 and illustrated in FIG. 2. FIG. 3 illustrates work definitions, which can be designated as either "operator execution" or "automatic execution" and is silent about screen items. Nothing in Beniyama has been found that teaches or suggests process definition directed graph has any relationship to the "plurality of screens used in the work flow" as recited above in claim 1.

Therefore, it is submitted that claim 1 and claims 2-3, which depend therefrom and add further patentable distinctions, are patentably distinguishable over Beniyama. Claim 8 recites "flow definition information which defines information for controlling a work flow, and screen definition information which defines screen items of a plurality of screens used in the work flow,

by a generating device" at lines 2-4. Claim 9 recites "storing flow definition information which defines information for controlling a work flow, and screen definition information which defines screen items of a plurality of screens used in the work flow" at lines 2-4. For the reasons discussed above, it is submitted that claims 8 and 9 are patentably distinguishable over Beniyama and withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

The Office Action stated that item 1204 of FIG. 12 in Beniyama anticipated "reading, from a storing device, flow definition information which defines a number of hierarchical levels, on each of which an approver gives approval to a form, in a work flow of a form process" in claim 4, at lines 3-5. Item 1204 of Beniyama disclosed "reads the record of the earliest execution request out of the execution requests retrieved at step 1202, and deletes it from the application program execution request management table 1111" (column 9, lines 35-38). Thus, item 1204 merely disclosed processing execution requests in chronological order and deleting the execution request from a table. In contrast, claim 4 recites "flow definition information which defines a number of hierarchical levels, on each of which an approver gives approval to a form" as quoted above, which patentably distinguishes claim 4 over item 1204 in FIG.12 because flow definition information includes a number of hierarchical levels that a form requiring approval passes through before being approved. Therefore, it is submitted that claims 4 and 5, which depends therefrom and adds further patentable distinctions, are patentably distinguishable over Beniyama and withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

The Office Action stated that column 5, lines 36-54 of Beniyama anticipated "flow definition information which defines presence/absence of withdrawal of a form forwarded in a work flow of a form process" in claim 6, at lines 3-4. Beniyama disclosed that the "'StartProcess' command receives a process instance name and a process definition name as inputs, and requests the work flow execution status control unit 0111 to start a process instance for a specified process definition with a specified process instance name" at column 5, lines 49-53. Flow definition information that defines "presence/absence of withdrawal of a form forwarded in a work flow of a form process" as recited in claim 6 above is patentably distinguishable over starting a process instance because starting a process instance does not indicate the presence or absence of a withdrawal form. Therefore it is submitted that claim 6 is patentably distinguishable over Beniyama and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

It is submitted that the claims are not taught, disclosed or suggested by the prior art. The claims are therefore in a condition suitable for allowance. An early Notice of Allowance is requested.

If any further fees, other than and except for the issue fee, are necessary with respect to this paper, the U.S.P.T.O. is requested to obtain the same from deposit account number 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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